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BAKER BELIEVES SPECTACULAR GEM UP FOR THE TEST IN SATURDAY'S GRADE III, \$175,000 COMMONWEALTH TURF

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, Nov. 8, 2019) – Candie Baker's \$125,000 Jefferson Cup winner **Spectacular Gem** could face a new test in Saturday's Grade III, \$175,000 Commonwealth Turf when he'll encounter a less than firm turf course and several horses that could pressure him on the lead.

"We'll have to see what the turf is like Saturday to know if he'll like it," trainer **Jimmy Baker** said. "He got over the firm going pretty well in September (in the Jefferson Cup) but we'll see what it's like Saturday.

"He doesn't need to have the lead but will likely be close to the front. If you look at his maiden win last year, he closed from well off the pace. I do think there is some other speed signed on in this race but he's training really well from his win in the Jefferson Cup."

Spectacular Gem, a 3-year-old son of Can the Man, is one of four 6-1 co-second choices on the morning line in Saturday's Commonwealth Turf. The three-time winner will break from post position No. 6 with **James Graham** in the saddle.

A field of 14 3-year-olds are signed on to compete in the 1 1/16-mile Commonwealth Turf with two horses as also eligible should any late scratches occur. **Pirate's Punch**, who is in the body of Saturday's race, entered a 1 1/16-mile allowance event on the dirt Sunday.

The temporary rail would be taken down on the Matt Winn Turf Course on Saturday and racing would be in Lane 1 on the hedge. Races were taken off the turf on Wednesday and Thursday because of rain that occurred in the Louisville area.

The complete field for the Commonwealth Turf from the rail out (with jockey, trainer, weight and morning line odds): **Tobacco Road** (Alex Achard, John Ennis, 118 pounds, 50-1); **Osage Moon** (Miguel Mena, Mark Casse, 118, 12-1); **Clint Maroon** (Channing Hill, Wayne Catalano, 120, 10-1); **Pirate's Punch** (Robby Albarado, Grant Forster, 118, 20-1); **Marquee Prince** (Tyler Gaffalione, Brad Cox, 120, 8-1); **Spectacular Gem** (Graham, Baker, 120, 6-1); **Tracksmith** (Brian Hernandez Jr., Joe Sharp, 120, 5-1); **Tiz Plus** (Ricardo Santana Jr., Asmussen, 118, 15-1); **Knicks Go** (Gabriel Saez, Ben Colebrook, 118, 12-1); **Armistice Day** (Corey Lanerie, Barbara Minshall, 120, 6-1); **Mr Dumas** (Joe Rocco Jr., John Ortiz, 118, 6-1); **Louder Than Bombs** (Alex Canchari, David Fawkes, 118, 8-1); **Faraway Kitten** (Julien Leparoux, Mike Maker, 123, 6-1); and **Journeyman** (Declan Cannon, Eoin Harty, 118, 20-1). Should any late scratches occur, the following horses could draw into the field: **Proliferate** (Chris Landeros, Casse, 118, 15-1); and **Clear Vision** (Cannon, Jerry O'Dwyer, 118, 8-1).

The Commonwealth Turf is carded as Saturday's featured event in Race 10 with a post time of 5:36 p.m. (all times Eastern). First post is 1 p.m.

ASMUSSEN CLOSING IN ON ROMANS' ALL-TIME TRAINING RECORD – Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen** is quickly closing in on trainer **Dale Romans'** all-time leading trainer title at Churchill Downs as he now trails the Louisville-native by just 19 wins, 735-716.

Asmussen entered Friday's card at Churchill Downs one win from tying fellow Hall of Famer **Bill Mott's** second-place total of 717 wins but it may take until the 2020 Spring Meet for him to break Romans' mark.

"I don't know if we can win 19 more this meet but hopefully we'll get there at the start of the Spring Meet," Asmussen said.

Asmussen, a 53-year-old native of South Dakota who splits his time between Texas and Kentucky, trails **Dale Baird** 9,445-8,644 wins for the national all-time training mark.

And, that's not all the potential milestones Asmussen is on target to surpass. The veteran horseman is approaching an astounding 1,000 stakes victories. Asmussen entered Friday with 990 stakes wins and could add to that total with **Tiz Plus** in Saturday's \$175,000 Commonwealth Turf (GIII) at Churchill Downs.

The Top 10 trainers at Churchill Downs: Dale Romans (735 wins), Bill Mott (717), Steve Asmussen (716), **D. Wayne Lukas** (532), **Bernie Flint** (495), **Tom Amoss** (485), **Kenny McPeck** (446), **Greg Foley** (419), **Mike Maker** (398) and **Angel Montano Sr.** (378).

DOWN THE STRETCH – Racing continues Friday at Churchill Downs where there is a \$17,781 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot. The sequence begins in Race 5. First post is 1 p.m. ... On Sunday, Churchill Downs will celebrate Military Appreciation Day. We invite any active military or veterans to enjoy a day at the races with a special discounted ticket to Millionaires Row for \$29. A portion of the ticket sales will benefit **Supplies Over Seas**, a locally-based nonprofit organization that has delivered supplies to 105 countries around the world. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.ticketmaster.com/military and use the offer code FTKNOX. ... **“Inside Churchill Downs”** will return to the airwaves Friday at 6 p.m. on ESPN 680/105.7. Those outside the Louisville area can listen live on www.espnloouisville.com. ... Entering Friday’s card at Churchill Downs, **Mike Maker** was two wins away from 400 victories beneath the Twin Spires. He had three entries.

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